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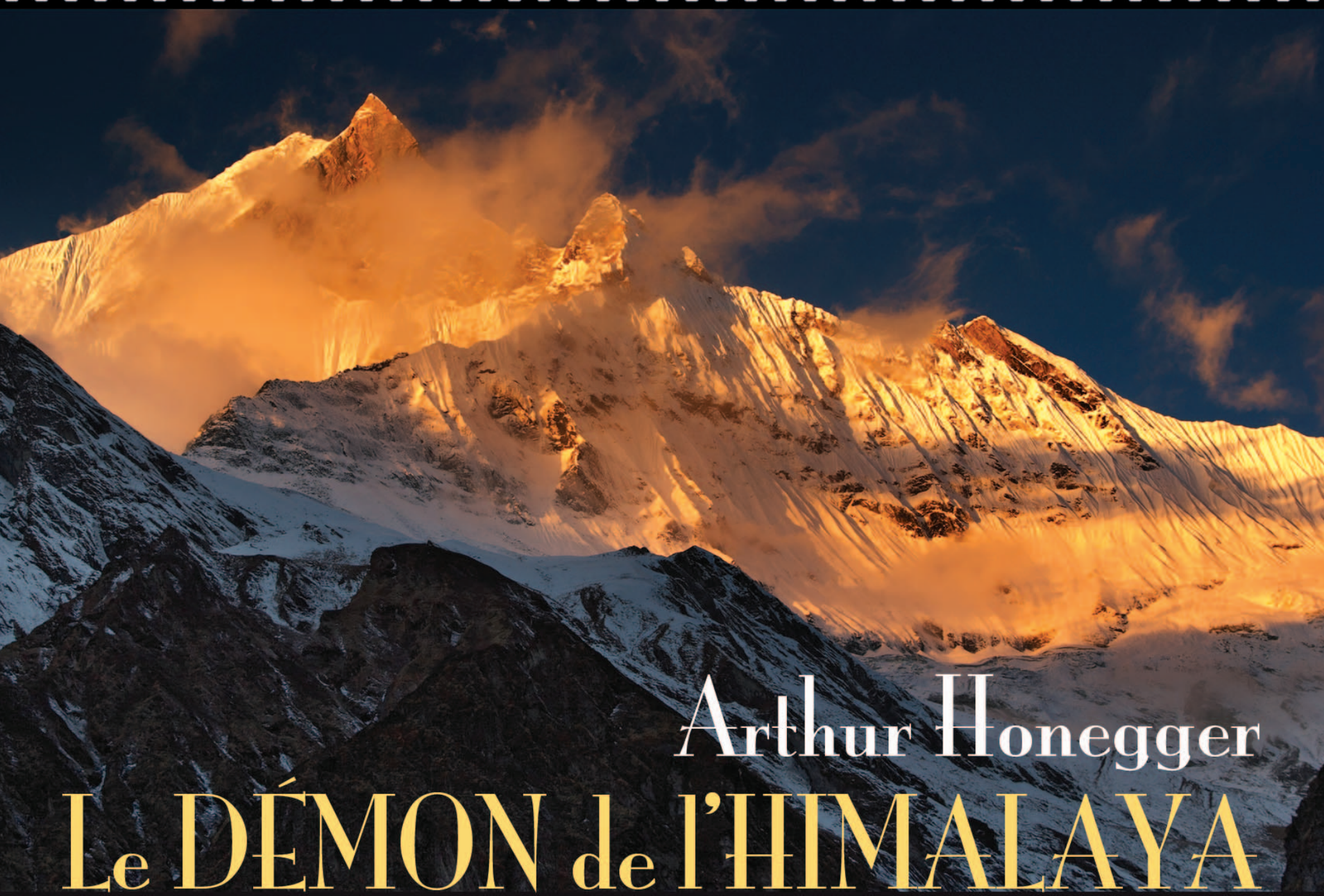

Arthur Honegger

Le DÉMON de l'HIMALAYA

CRIME et CHÂTIMENT • REGAIN • L'IDÉE

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adriano

Film Music of Arthur Honegger (1892–1955)

Regain (Suite I, 1937)

1	Le Panturle	3:38
2	Hiver	4:14
3	Printemps	1:48
4	Gédémus le rémouleur	0:57
5	Regain	1:57

Crime et Châtiment (Suite, 1935)

6	Générique	1:10
7	Raskolnikov – Sonia	3:19
8	Départ pour le crime	4:59
9	Meurtre d'Elisabeth	1:51
10	Visite nocturne – Final	3:17

Le Démon de l'Himalaya (2 Symphonic Movements, 1935)

11	Tempête de neige	12:19
12	Ascension et chute – Vision	9:36

13 L'Idée (Complete Score, 1934) 24:55

Arthur Honegger, one of the greatest of twentieth century composers, made an unrivalled contribution to film music during the course of some thirty years, from his scores for Abel Gance's silent epics *La Roue* in 1922 and *Napoléon* in 1926 (music that he regarded as his apprentice work) to his last works of this kind in 1951 – a total production of some forty film scores. Half of these were written and orchestrated by the composer himself, and the rest in collaboration with Arthur Hoérée, André Jolivet, Maurice Jaubert, Darius Milhaud, Roland-Manuel and Maurice Thiriet, this largely through pressure of time. Honegger's music for films is a considerable achievement for a composer of such importance.

Honegger, himself a film enthusiast often to be seen on the set during shooting, reveals astonishingly advanced ideas on the function of music in the cinema, his pre-eminence in the field recognised already in 1936 by Kurt London who described him as the true leader of modern film music in France. He regarded the ideal film score as a distinct component in a unified medium, despising clumsy attempts at cartoon synchronization with movement on the screen and looking forward to films that might not so much be supplied with music as inspired by it.

In Honegger's opinion, cinematic montage differs from musical composition in that, while the latter depends on continuity and logical development, the film relies on contrasts. Music and sound must, therefore, adapt themselves to strengthening and complementing the visual element, while the whole must be an artistic unity, in which the generally visual imagination of the public may be assisted to a greater understanding of the musical message.

Regain

Regain, a remarkable film by Marcel Pagnol of 1937, based on a novel by Jean Giono and featuring actors including Fernandel, Gabriel Gabrio and Orane Demazis, is a homage to Provence and its country people. The story concerns the deserted village of Aubignane and its infertile land, eventually brought to prosperity again through the united forces of a poacher and a cabaret-girl. Panturle has taken her away from Gédémus, a good-hearted but simple-minded knife-grinder, who had bought her after she had been raped by some charcoal-burners. His love for Arsule is the driving force behind his patient and honest labour.

Honegger's music is inspired and more varied in style than many other of his film scores. It is this attribute which makes it give way to the real and less pretentious demands of the film. A comparison of the soundtrack with the manuscript score proves not only that many pieces were drastically cut or not used at all but that others were used for sequences different from those for which they had originally been intended. This may have been the reason for the composer's decision to assemble a short symphonic suite of *Regain*, the score of which was never printed but was made available by the French publisher in the form of a photocopy of the manuscript score with the orchestral material. A second suite was extracted by the present writer in 1992.

The suite on this recording, in which the pointed heroic leitmotif is heard in various places, contains two evocative "season" pieces, *Printemps* (Spring) and *Hiver* (Winter), with an amusing miniature polka, characterizing the grinder's errands from village to village. Either by using a smaller chamber-music style ensemble or a full orchestra, the composer created inspired music which, when heard independently, immediately suggests a hymn to nature. As in the orchestras of many film scores by Honegger, the alto saxophone plays here an important part. Piano and extra percussion such as sleigh-bells, rattle and snare-drum have also been included in an ensemble of normal symphonic dimensions, apart from the absence of horns.

Crime et Châtiment

In Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, a student, obsessed by a murder he has committed, becomes involved with a prostitute whom he wishes to save. The more Raskolnikov feels attracted to Sonia, the more he feels the need to confess his crime to the police, who already suspect him, but cannot prove his guilt.

The film by Pierre Chénal, for whose *Les Mutinés de l'Elseneur* Honegger also wrote the music, with Pierre Blanchar in the title-rôle and stars such as Harry Baur and Madeleine Ozeray, set like a tense studio-theatre production, must have inspired the composer from the very beginning. Here he returns to the sombre musical language of *Les Misérables*, in 1934, after having written the large-scale score of *Der Dämon des Himalaya*.

While in *Les Misérables* the Ondes Martenot were not yet included, in *Crime et Châtiment*, with much the same scoring, except for the double basses, the instrument is used impressively as a solo instrument for leitmotifs, as re-inforcement of the bass-line, or as an atmospheric addition to the score.

The longest movement of the suite, which is actually intended to describe psychological development rather than physical action on the screen, is *Départ pour le crime*. Unlike the impressive Severs scene of *Les Misérables*, where no real musical theme appears, this movement combines longer sections of non-thematic musical cells with Raskolnikov's given leitmotif. The

dramatic, pulsating accompaniment of this movement is actually derived from the ascending motif of the theme of the *Générique* (Main Title) and also recurs in the murder scene. It re-appears in the form of an incessant *ostinato* and canon-like counter-theme in the same movement and in *Visite nocturne*. The leitmotifs of Sonia and of Raskolnikov, as subsequently heard in the second movement, are both similarly highly lyrical, differentiated psychologically by their accompaniments. In both *Générique* and *Final*, a theme of Russian flavour is brought to a climax, with very unusual, almost uncanny orchestration.

Once more we are faced with a score by one who may be considered the greatest film-composer, at least among European musicians. An incredible spontaneity, combined with great craftsmanship and sense of the dramatic produced by minimal means, makes *Crime et Châtiment* a remarkable achievement. This spontaneity is explained by the composer as follows: "In the case of film-music, I need only to see the picture and start my work: the images are still fresh before my eyes. The closer the picture is to my memory, the easier my work is: the most important thing is to transcribe impressions that are still fresh, without delay."

The suite assembled here has some of its movements exactly as they appear in the film (*Générique, Départ pour le crime*), while the others have been adapted by combining two shorter cues (*Raskolnikov-Sonia* and *Meurtre d'Elisabeth*) or even three (as, for example, in *Final*) into one.

Finally, as in most film scores re-recorded in this edition, doublings of wind instruments and the increase in the number of string players have often been found appropriate. Soundtrack recording technique of the time did not allow heavy instrumental texture. Since this music is clearly conceived symphonically, it needs a larger ensemble for modern balance requirements.

Le Démon de l'Himalaya

After a first successful expedition to the Himalayas in 1930, of which the documentary *Thron der Götter* was made, Professor Günter Oskar Dyrenfurth and director Andrew Marton had in mind to produce a dramatic mountain film, a mixture of fiction and documentary. The members of the 1934 expedition were, therefore, also contracted as screen actors and the professional actor Gustav Diessl was contracted as a mountaineer. Interiors were to be filmed later in the Berlin Grufa studios. The film tells the story of Norman, an ethnologist, who has in his possession the mask of the mountain demon Kali Mata, a spirit that prevents ordinary mortals from climbing the Himalayan peaks against the will of the gods of Tibet. Norman joins the expedition of Professor Wille (Dyrenfurth in person) and Anna, his fiancée, who remains at home, breaks the spell of the mask by smashing it, thus enabling the expedition to overcome its initial difficulties. Another woman, Ellen, the Professor's wife, eventually saves the climbers from the White Dead. After a terrible storm, for which some shots were later taken on the Swiss Jungfraujoch, and the appearance of the demon, Norman collapses and wakes up in the Buddhist monastery of Lamayuru, where in a vision he sees his companions triumphantly reaching the Golden Throne. Marton's subsequent Hollywood career as a second unit director gave him the chance to sell some exterior reels of *Der Dämon des Himalaya* to Frank Capra for use in his *Lost Horizon* of 1937 and even to re-use more of the old material in a new Himalayan drama of 1951, *Storm over Tibet* or *Mask of the Himalaya*, in which it seems that Honegger's music is heard again, with that of Leith Stevens.

Unfortunately no copies of the original film, nor of its post-war remake could be traced so that the final use in the soundtrack of the first of the two music pieces

that have survived in manuscript is not clear. A further version by a copyist has been found, which turns out to be nothing other than a reverse transcription of Honegger's *Tempête de Neige* (Snow-storm). On the other hand Honegger's manuscript has reference numbers placed already in reverse order and a percussion part showing hold slurs starting in the air. This may lead us to suppose that on the soundtrack this movement may have been intended to be edited or may actually have been edited on tapes played backwards, as the composer had already tried in his music for *Rapt* in 1934. Nevertheless one only adds reference numbers in reverse order for film editing, since they are not used in this form by musicians. Furthermore the copyist's score, which may have been the work of Leon Borchard, the conductor of the original soundtrack, played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, causes problems, among others in places where original triple appoggiaturas in all brass quotations of the leitmotif could not be properly played in reverse mode. Alternatively, perhaps it was decided later that the reverse score should be edited backwards, or possibly Honegger's original reference numbers were added afterwards, to help Borchard prepare a probable new version. In both cases music using such large orchestral forces, if played backwards, would result in an impossible cacophony, especially bearing in mind the somewhat primitive recording techniques of the time. While editing the score and the material for the present recording, it was decided to use Honegger's original manuscript and to revise the percussion part and various other short passages. A purely musical comparison of both versions of *Tempête de Neige* led us finally to prefer the original.

The score, a real and important discovery, is conceived for large orchestra, without horns, but including two saxophones, Trautonium (Ondes Martenot), piano, harp, percussion and a wordless mixed chorus. The music is "realistic" and experimental for its period, at least as film music, and is built on extended *ostinato* accompaniments, precursor of today's minimalist techniques, and chromatically dissonant motif-cells. While *Tempête* has no leitmotif, *Ascension et Chute*, to which a later cue, the final episode *Vision* has been added, is built on a passacaglia-like theme, interrupted by recollections of the demonic sounds of the brass heard in *Tempête*, leading to a climax through a short, vertiginous cadenza for the Ondes Martenot. Again the passacaglia is heard, as a counterpoint to the hymn of the chorus, ending on the Mixolydian mode on D.

Later, in 1943, Honegger would write *Mermoz*, another ambitious film score, similar in style and dramatic impact, making him once more the greatest, if hitherto unjustly neglected, European film composer of the first half of the twentieth century.

L'Idée

Honegger provided music for two animated pictures, *L'Idée* (1934) and *Callisto ou la petite nymphe de Diane* (1943). The first of these is an unusual and important work, both from the point of view of the film and of the music. It also initiated a series of scores in which the Ondes Martenot were used, an instrument included in relatively few of Honegger's "classical" works and never as prominently as in his film scores. At that time, while the Theremin, a comparable instrument in sound, was used sometimes excessively in Hollywood, Honegger made admirable use of the Ondes, as did his French colleagues Jacques Ibert, Charles Koechlin and Darius Milhaud.

As we are told by the painter Jiri Mucha in his memoirs *Au seuil de la nuit*, Bertold Bartosch, the creator of *L'Idée,* was a pioneer of the animated

cinema. He was very poor and crippled and had also worked as a special effects man with Jean Renoir and other directors, using self-made, almost amateur devices. With *L'Idée* Bartosch animated a series of woodcuts by the Belgian expressionist painter and illustrator Frans Masereel (1889-1972), a life-long militant pacifist, opposed to all forms of oppression. War, man's loneliness in the modern world and social criticism are constant themes in his works. Like some of his famous anti-capitalist and anti-war works, *L'Idée* is a cartoon-like textless sequence of 83 illustrations. Bartosch, by bringing to life the more harmless sections of Masereel's original story, excluding some crude details, was able to transmit through the most primitive frame-by-frame and superimposing techniques the artist's humanitarian message, assisted by the highly effective, spontaneous yet poignant score by Honegger. More than any other film score by the composer, this contains typical devices of the film and theatre music of the 1920s and 1930s, making it sound at times like Hindemith or Kurt Weill. The "Idea" itself, its lyrical leitmotif stated and developed at the beginning by a solo of 39 bars for Ondes Martenot, is represented by the silhouette of an immortal, naked girl, inspiring mankind and leading revolt against all kinds of oppression.

In 1935 the choreographer Elsa Darciel staged a ballet based on *L'Idée* in Brussels, using music by Honegger and by Eric Satie, but it is not known whether the music by Honegger was that of the Bartosch film. It is also of interest to know that in 1961 the same subject inspired the Polish composer Jadwiga Szajna-Lewendowska to music for a pantomime.

The instrumental ensemble of *L'Idée* is confined to some fourteen players, Ondes Martenot, piano, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion and string quartet. In the present recording the string quartet has been augmented to 6-6-4-4 in order to improve the ensemble balance, thus avoiding the use of extra microphone gimmickry.

Notes by Adriano
Edited by Keith Anderson

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra

The Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1929 as the first professional musical ensemble fulfilling the needs of radio broadcasting in Slovakia. The first conductors already placed particular emphasis on contemporary Slovak music in their programmes, resulting in a close connection with leading Slovak composers, including Alexander Moyzes, Eugen Suchoň, Ján Cikker and others. The original ensemble was gradually enlarged and from 1942, thanks to Alexander Moyzes, the then Director of Music in Slovak Radio, regular symphony concerts were given, broadcast live by Slovak Radio. From 1943 to 1946 the Yugoslavian Krešimír Baranovič was the chief conductor of the orchestra, to which he made a vital contribution. His successors were Ľudovít Rajter, Ladislav Slovák, Václav Jiráček, Otakar Trhlík, Bystrík Režucha and Ondrej Lenárd, whose successful performances and recordings from 1977 to 1990 helped the orchestra to establish itself as an internationally known concert ensemble. His successor Róbert Stankovsky continued this work, until his unexpected death at age of 36. Charles Olivieri-Munroe held the position of chief conductor from 2001 to 2003, and Oliver von Dohnányi from 2006 to 2007. The current resident conductor is Mario Kosik, with Kirk Trevor as principal guest conductor. Through its broadcasts and many recordings the orchestra has also become a part of concert life abroad, with successful tours to Austria, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Bulgaria, Spain, Japan, Great Britain and Malta.

Photo: P. Kasti

Slovak Philharmonic Choir

The Slovak Philharmonic Choir was formed in 1946 from the mixed choir of Radio Bratislava and has performed, over the years, a wide repertoire of music, ranging from the earliest choral works to the work of contemporary composers. The Choir, since 1990 directed by Jan Rozehnal, has performed under some of the most distinguished conductors, from Claudio Abbado and Lorin Maazel to Václav Talich and Yuri Temirkanov, and has appeared in concerts and festival performances throughout Europe, in addition to continuing collaboration with the opera-houses of Vienna, Strasbourg, Szeged, Bordeaux and Düsseldorf. Recordings by the Choir include the oratorio *The Legend of St. Elizabeth* by Liszt for Hungaroton, awarded the Paris Grand Prix du Disque in 1974 and a number of works for Naxos and Marco Polo.

Jacques Tchamkerten

Jacques Tchamkerten was born in Geneva in 1960. After studying piano, then organ with Pierre Segond at the Conservatoire de Genève, he undertook the study of the Ondes Martenot with Jeanne Loriod, in whose class he was awarded a gold medal at the Conservatoire de Saint-Maur (France) in 1986. Since then he has performed in a dozen European countries, either with orchestra of in chamber ensembles. He was also a member, from 1990 to 1996, of the *Sextuor Jeanne Loriod*, an ensemble of six ondes Martenot. In addition to his activities as an instrumentalist, Jacques Tchamkerten has published several works on Swiss and French music from the twentieth century, notably on Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, Ernest Bloch, Arthur Honegger, and Olivier Messiaen and he has written several articles for the new edition of the *New Grove Dictionary*. He is, in addition, responsible for the library of the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève.

Adriano

Swiss-born conductor-composer Adriano lives in Zürich. As a musician he is mostly self-taught. In the late 1970s he established himself as a specialist on Ottorino Respighi and he has conducted many CDs of obscure or neglected symphonic repertoire. He has also initiated and recorded a series of fifteen CDs mainly of European film-music composers, and has created and directed a series of classical music videos. All of Adriano's recording projects have found wide recognition and his commitment is known to be strong and uncompromising. In his opinion, music history should be revised to show that it is not just the story of the so-called great composers, and that it should not be neatly classified into traditions and categories. Much more good music has been written than certain musicologists and critics would care to admit. Adriano has composed songs, orchestral, chamber and incidental pieces. His most recent works are a *Concertino for celesta and strings*, a *Concertino for Piano, strings and percussion*, an *Obscure Saraband for organ, tubular bells, timpani and strings, Cryptic Sketches for Brass Quintet* and *Thoughts and Associations for clarinet and string quartet*, of which the first five have been recorded. His instrumental adaptations include songs by Modest Mussorgsky (four cycles), Ottorino Respighi (four cycles), Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf, Othmar Schoeck, Jacques Ibert and Johann Strauss II. Adriano works for various record companies. For Marco Polo and Naxos he has recorded a total of thirty CDs.

Photo: Dan Oria

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HONEGGER: Le Démon de l'Himalaya
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FILM MUSIC CLASSICS

Playing Time 74:40

ARTHUR HONEGGER
(1892–1955)

1–5	**Regain** (Suite I, 1937)	12:43
6–10	**Crime et Châtiment** (Suite, 1934)*	14:40
11–12	**Le Démon de l'Himalaya** (2 Symphonic Movements, 1935)*†	21:57
13	**L'Idée** (Complete Score, 1934)*	24:55

Full track details in the enclosed booklet

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra
Jacques Tchamkerten, Ondes Martenot*
Slovak Philharmonic Choir†
Choirmaster: Ladislav Holàsek
Conducted by Adriano

Arthur Honegger, one of the greatest twentieth century composers, made an unrivalled contribution to film music during the course of some thirty years, from his scores for Abel Gance's silent epics *La Roue* in 1922 and *Napoléon* in 1926 to his last works of this kind in 1951 – a total of some forty film scores. This recording brings together four scores from the 1930s, beginning with Honegger's own suite from the music he wrote for Marcel Pagnol's 1937 film, REGAIN, a homage to Provence and its country people. This is followed by a suite drawn from the music for Pierre Chénal's 1934 screen dramatisation of Dostoyevsky's great novel, CRIME ET CHÂTIMENT, and two symphonic movements assembled from the score for LE DÉMON DE L'HIMALAYA of 1935. The recording concludes with the complete score provided by Honegger for Bertold Bartosch's 1934 animated picture, L'IDÉE.

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Slovak Radio, Bratislava, 24–28 June 1992 (tracks 6–10 & 13), 6–9 February 1993 (tracks 1–5 & 11), 22 June 1993 (track 12)
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